

The stated meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington was held on Thursday, October 9, 2025 via webinar and in-person at the Township Administration Building, Abington, PA, with President Hecker presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: Commissioners BRODSKY, ROTHMAN, LANEY-MARTIN, BROWNE, WINEGRAD, HENRY, ZAPPONE, YOUNG-GERTZ, SPIEGELMAN, BOLE, SCHREIBER, BOWMAN, VAHEY, HECKER
Excused: Commissioner DiPLACIDO

Also Present: Township Manager Christman
Township Solicitor Clarke

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

BOARD VICE PRESIDENT ANNOUNCEMENTS:

President Hecker announced that this past weekend, Abington Township held its first Annual Abington Fest, and it was a tremendous success. There were hundreds of families in attendance, and the two-day event included a kids dash for ages 2-10, 5K Run/Walk, Parent/Child Golf Tournament, and a Fall Festival with a Trunk-or-Treat full of kids' activities and music.

One of the amazing things about this Township is the spirit of volunteerism and community engagement, especially among our staff many of whom are Township residents who care deeply about this community. We want to thank everyone who was involved in those efforts this past weekend. One of the things that makes Abington unique is the collaboration and this event would not have been possible without the collaboration of the Parks and Recreation Department, Library, Police, Public Works, Fire, Wastewater Departments and many more as well as many volunteers.

Liz Fitzgerald, Director of the Library and Special Assistant for Public Affairs, did an amazing job. She is always looking for additional things to bring to the community, and this was her idea, and she did a great job. And Jessica Tholey does an absolute unbelievable job in Parks and Recreation Department. The good news is we are going to have this event again, so mark your calendar for the weekend of October 2, 2026. There will be new additions including a movie night on Friday, and we will keep everyone updated throughout the year.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

Lora Lehmann, resident, expressed concern about bringing ordinance, zoning changes and red-light camera contracts to a vote to the Board of Commissioners without a committee review. She was also concerned about the Working Session being canceled and there are no committee meetings except for Fire, Library and Finance and no Public Affairs gets a proper committee review.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to approve Items a. and b. as listed under the Consent Agenda as follows:

To approve the minutes from the Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting of September 11, 2025.

To appoint Jamey Piggott to the Civil Service Commission to fill the term ending on 12/31/2031 as recommended by the Civil Service Commission.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

President Hecker announced that Item BOC-04-100925 has been removed from the agenda at the request of the applicant.

Item BOC-03-100925:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Brodsky to approve LD-25-01 – 1526 Fairview Avenue, Preliminary/Final Major Subdivision and Land Development plans and adopt Resolution No. 25-025.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Item BOC-05-100925:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to authorize advertisement of an ordinance of Abington Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, pursuant to Article V of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code amending the Abington Township Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance of 1991 to amend Section 146-51 to permit a waiver from the Land Development Plan approval process for a partial nonconforming structure restoration.

Solicitor Clarke said we reviewed the section of the code that deals with redevelopment or rebuilding of a property after SPS suffered a catastrophic event where they lost 50% to 75% of the value of their property. There is a weakness in the zoning code related to the reconstruction of nonconforming structures by a catastrophic event. The amendment would leave intact the restrictions on the reestablishment of a nonconforming use as well as the option to rebuild where less than 50% of the value of the nonconforming structure use is effective.

However, where the conforming use is housed in a nonconforming structure that was subsequently destroyed was greater than 50% of the value in a catastrophic event, the amendment would provide an opportunity to rebuild up to 75% of the previous gross floor area. No nonconformities are permitted to be expanded and the nonconforming rebuild must also be initiated within 18 months of the catastrophic event.

The amendment also refers to a partial nonconforming structure waiver, which is the subject of the proposed SALDO amendment. The SALDO amendment adds to the Township's existing process for waivers from land development and this process would be applicable for reconstructions of nonconforming structures and housing conforming uses that were destroyed in a catastrophic event.

The process requires compliance with all zoning, building and other code standards as applicable and only permits the process to be applied with a reconstruction that would not otherwise increase the impact on the surrounding community.

The intention of this process is that the reconstruction most often does not require the same extensive analysis for earthmoving or stormwater since the site is already developed. The process provides for oversight for the redevelopment without putting an applicant through a process not designed for rebuilding.

While this review and these changes were prompted by SPS, we realized while reviewing the code that this could be applied to other businesses within the Township that suffer a catastrophic event, and while it would not necessarily prevent them from rebuilding for the redevelopment, it could result in some absurd redevelopment.

SPS is a prime example such as they will still be able to rebuild, but instead of building one or two large buildings as they previously had, they would be forced to build five or six smaller buildings, which would be an absurd result.

Vice President Vahey said the intention for this schedule is that we would like to get this done by the end of the year. It is in his resident's best interest that this development occurs expeditiously and safely as possible so this will help streamline that process. It is his hope that we can get this passed by the end of this calendar year. However, due to the timing between the November and December meetings, we will not have 30 days to advertise, so we are doing this somewhat out of order, and will vote to advertise it tonight and then have a working session in November to discuss it further with final passage in December.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Laney-Martin questioned whether this is only for commercial spaces or is it for residential nonconforming buildings.

Solicitor Clarke replied it is for any structure within the Township that is a nonconforming use that has suffered a catastrophic event that has led to more than 50% of the value of the property being destroyed.

Commissioner Laney-Martin said there are a lot of places in her ward that are nonconforming that have been there for over 50 years that were built as residential, and if they cannot rebuild their home how it was, it could cause issues with insurance, etc., so we will need to discuss it further.

Solicitor Clarke replied if it is a conforming use, but the dimensional aspects are nonconforming, then they will be fine.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Item BOC-06-100925:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to authorize an advertisement of an ordinance of Abington Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, pursuant to Article VI the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code amending the Abington Township Zoning Ordinance of 2017 to amend Section 1904 to allow partial reconstruction of a nonconforming building or structure for a permitted use.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Item BOC-07-100925:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to authorize an advertisement of an ordinance amending Chapter 155 – “Traffic Control” Article I “Automated Red Light Enforcement Systems” – Section 155-17 “Expiration.”

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Item BOC-08-100925:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to approve the Five-Year Winter Traffic Services Agreement with Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and adopt Resolution No. 25-026.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Item BOC-09-100925:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Bowman to approve the renaming of the “Inclusive Park and Playground” to “A Place to Play” Park and Playground.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Young-Gertz said this playground is a super treasure in the Township and calling it “A Place to Play” more accurately describes what it is all about for anyone in the Township, and she urged the Board’s support.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Item BOC-10-100925:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Schreiber to dedicate a pedestrian bridge at Roychester Park in memory of United States Army Corps of Engineers Retired Chief of Planning Adrian Leary.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

Item BOC-11-100925:

Vice President Vahey made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Schreiber to authorize the preparation and advertisement of bid specifications for the Field Improvements Project.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Item FC-01-100925:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Vice President Vahey to approve the August 2025 expenditures in the amount of \$4,078,663.95 and salaries and wages in the amount of \$2,511,228.91 and authorize the proper officials to sign and approve invoices and supporting documentation in payment of bills and contracts as they mature through the month of November 2025.

Roll call resulted in motion being passed 14-0. Commissioner DiPlacido was absent during roll call.

Item FC-02-100925:

Commissioner Winegrad made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to authorize the President and Township Manager to enter into an agreement with Zelenkofske Axelrod LLC to act as Township's independent auditors for calendar years ending December 31, 2025, 2026 and 2027.

President Hecker asked for any comments from Commissioners. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 14-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ross Abel, resident, asked for any updates on a systematic traffic calming approach and strategy as well as an active transportation strategy from the Township.

President Hecker said we will speak with the Manager and follow up. Also, the Abington Separated Bike Lanes Action Plan Public Meeting will be held on October 29th.

Lora Lehmann, resident, expressed concern about the process “going quickly” for the ordinance for SPS as discussion will be insignificant. Also, about “Right To Know” budget document information being denied because residents need time to review, so their comments will make a difference.

Connie Briggs, resident, commented that she posted on Nextdoor asking residents to send comments to their Commissioners for the budget preliminary 2026 document to be released right before the meeting or several days before.

She sent an email and attended the Finance Committee meeting on September 18th where she asked for the budget document to be sent in a PDF format before the October 16th meeting. She then submitted a “Right To Know” request a few days ago asking to have the document sent in digital format or equivalent by October 14th, and it was denied based on the fact that it is not a public record at this time and response records are currently exempt from public disclosure pursuant to Section 701.b.10 of the RTK. She wanted to have time to review it before the meeting so she can ask informed questions.

ADJOURNMENT: 7:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Recording Secretary

The following resolutions were adopted by the Board of Commissioners on October 9, 2025:

Resolution No. 25-025

Resolution No. 25-026